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Career Crowned by Failure

Eden's Memoir Illustrates Difficulties of Our Time

FULL CIRCLE: THE MEMOIRS OF ANTHONY EDEN. (Houghton Mifflin Company, 679, pgs., \$6.95.)

Reviewed by MARQUIS W. CHILDS

TIS PAINFULLY evident that in a career marked by one crushing disappointment after another, Anthony Eden has failed once again in what may well be a final attempt to make a high mark in history. For a variety of reasons, he fails, as many reviewers have already noted, to vindicate himself in his several controversies with the late John Foster Dulles.

What makes this so ironic is that in the long view of history the judgment is likely to go for Eden in the settlement of the Indo-China crists. He performed a master-ful service to the world in helping to prevent the conflict from spreading and in saving what could be saved which was considerable, from the French debacle in the long and poisonous war in the Indo-China jungle. Even in the matter of Suezi and his last and fatal error in public life, he has a strong case to make against the dilatoriness and indecision of Dulles and the Eisenhower Administration.

But the tone of the book tends to be carping and querulous. There is in it no largeness of spirit. Rarely is it infused with the human perspective that we had a right to expect from one who had played so close and important a part in the drama of our times.

HEMEMOIR reads like the chronicle of a technician, a skilled and dedicated archnician, but nevertheless a man who is configured with day to day details beginning in 1951 when Eden became foreign secretary, and concluding when he resigned as Prime Minister after the Suez liesco. Because the story thus begins in mid-career, we have none of the long sweep of the record that went before, Eden's brave stand against "appeasement" in the late "30s and his heroic radeavors at the side of Winston Churchill diving World War II. The author thus does an injustice to himself.

What emerges is a fussy and somewhat confidered self-justification that is beneath the Eden of England's finest hour. In that matter it is not up to the level of the Eden who at Geneva through the rying spring of 1954 patiently pered in a settlement that saved half of the communist curtain. This was after Dulles had washed his tands of the whole affair and had returned to Washington.

In many respects, however, the Eden to many respects, however, the Eden to more is an important book which should have more serious attention than it is likely to get in this country. Above all it illustrates the difficulty of maintaining a procedul alliance between sovereign powers in a revolutionary world when the interests of the two powers are bound to come into conflict. Eden at several points records his resentment of the repeated American stress on "colonialism," and particularly British colonialism, as one source of conflict.

AT CASE POINT in expressing, his ditterness at the American stand toward Britain and France on Suez, he implies that what the two European powers undertook in Egypt was no more than what the United States had done in Guatemala. That was to engineer the overthrow of a Communist-influenced government.

"We had understood her action there and dene what we could not to hamper her in the Security Council," he writes "The United States was behaving (in the United Nations) in a precisely contrary manner towards us. When this point was

put to United States officials, they had

Although there are similarities, the analogy between Suez and Guatemala is not close. What Eden is really protesting, as frequently throughout his memoir, is the self-righteousness of the administration in Washington which reflected, as he puts it, Dulles, the "preacher" in world politics. The United States never committed the cardinal mistake of openly attacking an unfriendly and even hostile regime in Guatemala.

THERE IS SOMETHING of the personal in the present chronicle. Eden tells, for example, of his visit in early October of 1956 to his wife's hospital room. There he suffered a violent seizure with a temperature of 106 degrees. In the weeks

that followed leading up to the Suez crisis, Eden's illness was the subject of wide speculation with the rumor that he was of necessity under sedatives which conditioned his judgments. While his health was a part of the final tragedy, the account he gives is so sketchy that the reader is scarcely moved either to compassion or understanding.

In a Toynbeean time of troubles so vast as to beggar the imagination, Eden, as his memoir shows, scarcely lived up to the need of the hour. But this is a commentary on the time rather than on the man. If he had written his story in a more calm and contemplative mood and out of a more generous spirit, he would have done the world and his own reputation a greater service.

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